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House Panel Ponders 'Marginal' Actions

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The first four cases that Special Counsel Leon Jaworski has presented to the House Ethics Committee for action in the Korean influence-buying probe appear to involve "marginal" actions by four Democratic congressmen who accepted relatively small payments from millionaire rice dealer Tongsun Park.

The cases, according to sources, will require members of the ethics committee to make "judgment calls" on whether the actions of the congressmen in accepting contributions from Park violated House rules and ethical standards.

The congressmen being reviewed by ethics committee members, congressional sources have confirmed, are John J. McFall, D-Calif.; Edward J. Patten, D-N.J.; Edward R. Roybal, D-Calif.; and Charles H. Wilson, D-Calif.

Judging from public testimony about the cases, none involves allegations of bribery or any proof that Park actually bought the influence of the congressmen involved. Instead, they involve varying activities which could be considered improper or just bad judgment.

MEMBERS OF THE committee have been given until Monday to read secret reports on the four congressmen, who were among 30 current or former members of Congress that Park testified about during committee public hearings in April.

The committee is scheduled to meet next Wednesday to review the cases, which Jaworski presented in the form of statements of fact, along with applicable law or House rules, but without recommendations.

McFall, former House Democratic whip, has acknowledged that Park gave him cash contributions of \$1,000 in 1972 and \$3,000 in 1974, which were placed into his congressional office account and not officially counted as campaign contributions. He is a senior member of the House Appropriations Committee.

Patten, according to Park, was given \$500 a year from 1970 through 1976 to buy tickets to a Middlesex, N.J., annual political affair. The case involves at least two checks Patten wrote for the affair which made it appear he was paying for the tickets. Patten is a senior member of the House Appropriations Committee.

Roybal has acknowledged that Park gave him a \$1,000 cash contribution in 1974. Other details of Roybal's case have not surfaced. He is a member of the House Appropriations Committee.

Wilson, according to Park's testimony, was given \$1,000 in Korean currency, which was later converted to U.S. dollars, as a "typical wedding present" upon the congressman's marriage to a South Korean woman in 1975.

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ALL FOUR OF THE congressmen have denied any wrongdoing in their dealings with Park, who has testified he gave more than \$850,000 to the 30 current and former congressmen he has identified. The four cases seem minor compared to Park's testimony about payments to legislators who have since left Congress.

These include thousands of dollars in alleged cash payments to former Rep. Otto Passman, D-La., who has been indicted in the case; former Rep. Richard T. Hanna, D-Calif., sentenced to jail after pleading guilty in the case; former Rep. Cornelius Gallagher, D-N.J., former Rep. William Minshall, R-Ohio, former Rep. Nick Galifianakis, D-N.C., and former Rep. Edwin Edwards, D-La., now Louisiana governor.

In addition to the four cases known to be under review by the committee, there was some indication that it was being asked to look at a fifth case, although congressional sources differed on whether it was included.

This case, discussed at several public hearings, involves Rep. John Breaux, D-La., who Park has claimed he sent \$5,000 in 1972, allegedly funneled through a third person. Park has said he is not sure Breaux says he never received it. Investigators have been trying to determine who cashed a Park check used to generate the funds.

Of the 30 legislators publicly discussed by Park, 14 are still in Congress. Public discussions about the activities of the remaining current congressmen have indicated little in the way of culpability in the case.